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EDITOR'S TABLE.

THE Societies of Naturalists, Morphologists, Physiologists and Geologists met together during the late holidays in the ample halls of the Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore. The Geologists had met previously independently of the other societies. Their presence at Johns Hopkins added much to the interest of the meetings, and permitted some exchanges of hours on occasions of especial interest. The Naturalists listened to an excellent address from the retiring president, Dr. Minot, and had an instructive debate on the influence of the environment on animal life, conducted by Messrs. Osborn, Hyatt, Brooks and Merriam. Impressive papers were read before the Morphologists by Drs. Wilson and Hyatt; the former embryological, the latter paleontological. Three of the societies sat down to dinner at the Stafford House on Friday evening, and did justice to the exceptional hospitality of the host, Mr. Moale, himself a graduate of Johns Hopkins. The place of next meeting has not been decided on, but it is hoped that it will be such as will suit the convenience of several societies additional to those that met at Baltimore. These are the Anatomists, who met this year in New York; and the newly organized societies of Botanists and Psychologists.

These bodies all consist of actual workers in their respective fields, and they are, therefore, with a few others, the only scientific societies in this country in which strict qualifications are requisite for membership. Our contemporary, the *American Geologist*, in a recent editorial article, advocates the establishment of academies of science in the several States of the Union, as was done by the *NATURALIST* many years ago. It points to Indiana as furnishing an example worthy of imitation, since the legislature has made an appropriation for a biological survey of the State, to be conducted by its Academy of Science. The prime condition of prosperity for an academy of science must always be the effective character of its membership. This will always be especially important where State aid is granted. Some practical test of fitness for membership is necessary. One such test would be membership in one of the affiliated societies referred to above. A State Academy of Science composed of all the members of these societies resident within its borders, would be a very effective body.

SCIENTIFIC exploration is becoming popular in the United States as the desire to extend knowledge increases. Apart from Government

expeditions, Philadelphia was for a long time the centre of activity of this work, as the Arctic expeditions of Kane, Hays and Peary and the South American expeditions of Orton and Smith testify. Abbott and Donaldson Smith the African explorers, are Philadelphians, as is also Rockhill, who traversed Thibet and China a few years ago. Ann Arbor University has sent two expeditions to the Philippine Islands, and Iowa University sent one to Central America, and one to the Arctic regions north of Mackenzie's River, of which we gave an account in the last number of the *NATURALIST*. New York sent Rusby to Bolivia and Peru, and more recently Weber to Java. There have been several expeditions nearer home, as to the West Indies and Labrador and Central America. We do not refer to Government expeditions, which were more frequent formerly than of recent years.